



February 28, 2013

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[www.oregonfnaws.org](http://www.oregonfnaws.org)

"Putting Wild Sheep  
on the Mountain"

Senator Chris Edwards Co-Chair  
Representative Ben Unger, Co-Chair  
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources  
900 Court Street N.E., Room 453  
Salem, Oregon 97301

**Scotch Thistle treatments along the Lower Deschutes River**

The Oregon Chapter of the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, is a 501c3 corporation, registered in the State of Oregon. We are a hunting and conservation group. Our mission it to continue to assure effective placement of bighorn sheep and Rocky Mountain goats in supportive habitat in the State of Oregon. Maintaining suitable habitat, effective predator management, and monitoring communicable disease events are all critical to our mission.

Over the past seven years, our team has closely focused on the lower Deschutes River adjacent to the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) Wildlife Area and BLM holdings. Initially our treatment was comprised of our manpower in floatable craft working along the river and manually removing the Scotch Thistle. During the last four weed cycles however, we have made application to the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) Noxious Weed Program for funding of herbicidal treatment of the targeted weed species. We have been successfully awarded funding over the last four cycles. The pass through funding from ODA, has allowed ODFW staff to hire a contractor to apply selective herbicide in all of the critical key riparian and upland areas.

During the last four cycles, it has been our pleasure to work closely with both ODFW and ODA staffers. Shannon Brubaker and Tim Butler, of ODA's Noxious Weed Program staff have been absolutely critical to the success of our program. Shannon's abilities to help us through the application and accounting process(s) have been instrumental in our success administratively. Tim's support both over the phone and face to face, in the field, has been absolutely invaluable to our mission's success.

By successfully eradicating the thistle along the riverene, upland, and in the flats areas of the river and rehabilitating the habitat areas by re-seeding over the former thistle seed beds, we are able to both stop continual spread of the weeds but also the grass that has been sown over the old thistle flats is now being used as grazing habitat for the bighorns to use under the cover of darkness. This activity will hopefully continue to grow and allow for a continuing expansion of feeding sources for the bighorn sheep along the lower Deschutes River.

The ODA's Noxious Weed Grant Program has been an absolutely terrific boost to bighorn sheep and other wildlife within the lower canyon. Both Shannon and Tim's work has been superb! They both offer answers to technical and process questions when ever necessary.

Looking toward the future, I would heartily recommend that ODA's Noxious Weed Program receive additional funding that supports both office and field staff. The office staff also needs additional, effective, technical support, not additional layers of oversight. More worker bee's! Both Tim and Shannon have a terrific level of institutional, process, and program knowledge. They are very experienced with the other state, county, and local players that are very much related to the success of the programs in the field.

Both Shannon and Tim need to remain central parts of the program. Capacity, both internal and external could be greatly enhanced with additional support!

Our thanks to you for the opportunity to testify today!

Sincerely,

George Houston  
Past President  
Board Member  
Noxious Weed Project Coordinator  
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